

FEATURED ARTICLES

Supreme Court Hears Birthright Case 1

Train Trouble in N.J. 3

New Tidibits 5

Academic Corner 6

This Week in History 7

Supreme Court Hears Birthright Case

What This Means for Immigrant Families

By Bonnie K. Goodman

On May 15, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court held a hearing that could redefine U.S. citizenship. The case challenges President Trump's 2018 **executive order**¹ that revokes automatic **birthright citizenship**² for children born to noncitizen parents. The states of New Jersey and Washington, along with civil rights groups, filed a complaint against the order.

The 14th Amendment and Citizenship

The case focuses on whether Trump's executive order violates the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which was added in 1868 to give citizenship to former slaves. The law states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States." This is why most children born in the U.S. automatically receive

citizenship, regardless of their parents' legal status.

Both Sides' Arguments

Trump's policy supporters believe that the 14th Amendment was created for citizens in slavery and does not apply to children of immigrants. They argue that people not "subject to the **jurisdiction**³" of the U.S. cannot give citizenship to their children.

Supporters of birthright citizenship point out that it has been, and still is, a legal right and a Constitutional right for over a century. They warn that ending the policy will endanger millions and create **stateless**⁴ children.

Continued on next page →

1. **executive order**: a president's written instructions

2. **birthright citizenship**: citizenship granted by birth

3. **jurisdiction**: authority and control

4. **stateless**: having no citizenship from any country

Supreme Court Hears Birthright Case *Continued*

Another argument proposed was that the president does not have the authority to decide matters of citizenship. This should only be allowed through an amendment to the Constitution, a long and difficult process. However, an equally challenging question is whether a court may block an executive order in these matters while the case is being decided.

The Court Proceedings

All nine justices took part in the hearing and brought forward difficult queries. Some of the conservative justices seemed willing to withdraw birthright citizenship, while liberal justices stood firmly in support.

The deciding ruling is expected in June. Its impact would be immediate, either enabling and restoring immigration for

thousands who are separated from their families or undoing these policies and blocking birthright citizenship.

Looking at the Bigger Picture

This particular case fits within the broader public debate surrounding immigration, citizenship, and presidential power. Advocacy groups and legal scholars on both sides are watching its progress closely.

The ruling could be one of the most important constitutional decisions in recent years. It will likely influence the future of citizenship and the balance between executive authority and constitutional law.

Review Questions



Supreme Court Hears Birthright Case

1. What did President Trump attempt to do with birthright citizenship?

2. What was the main legal counterargument against Trump's policy?

3. Why is this case significant for the future of immigration law?



Train Trouble in N.J.

Engineer Strike Shuts Down NJ Transit Rail Service

By Bonnie K. Goodman

This week, New Jersey experienced its first significant rail strike in over forty years. Last Friday, almost 450 engineers belonging to the same **labor union**¹ brought all NJ Transit trains to a halt, effectively leaving the region without train services. This step was expected to compromise the daily travel for over 300,000 commuters in New Jersey, New York City, and Pennsylvania, transforming the area into a commuter nightmare.

One of the workers' concerns was fair wages. The engineers had not received raises in several years and were not compensated as much as others in the area. Despite operating in some of the most expensive areas in the country, NJ Transit engineers were one of the lowest-paid employees. It was only logical for the union to advocate for compensation similar to that offered by other transit companies, such as the Long Island Rail Road.

Effects on Public Transit Users

The strike caused major problems. Although NJ Transit expanded its bus and commuter lots, the backup strategies were not enough. Passengers were stuck on buses that were already overloaded.

Other services, such as concerts at the MetLife Stadium, were also impacted by the strike and prompted the venue's management to suggest people use other means of transport to the venue.

Settlements and Consequences

NJ Transit and the union workers came to a tentative agreement on Sunday after three days of striking. They reached an agreement that included steps towards wage increases. However, details were not immediately released to the public.

N.J. Governor Phil Murphy commented on the deal, saying it is "fair to NJ Transit's employees while also being affordable for our state's commuters and taxpayers."

Train services started again on Tuesday after completing the required safety inspections and preparations. NJ Transit is compensating commuters with refunds and will be extending the validity of all tickets and monthly passes that were impacted by the strike.

Moving Forward

The strike has parallels with the 1894 Pullman Strike and the 1935 enactment of the National Labor Relations Act, which gave workers the right to form unions and engage in **collective bargaining**.² These incidents mark the significant role that labor unions continue to fight for on behalf of employees across various industries.

The recent strike illustrates the difficulty of balancing public service responsibilities with fair labor practices. This serves as a modern case study on the influence of labor unions in society at large.

5. **Labor Union:** A collective of workers organized for the sake of their rights and interests.

6. **Collective Bargaining:** An agreement between the union and the employer from which the union seeks representation for its members.

Review Questions

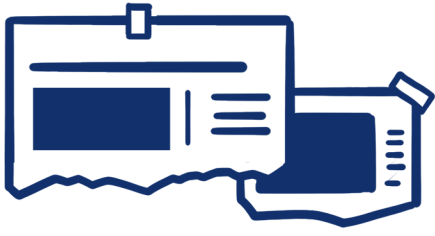


Train Trouble in N.J.

1. How many engineers took part in the strike, and what were the consequences?

2. In what ways did the strike affect public events and services?

3. In what ways does the recent transit strike relate to active movements in U.S. labor history?



News Tidbits

By Chani Karp



Chimpanzees Administer First Aid

Humans are not the only living things that can pull out their first-aid kits to treat their injuries. Chimpanzees have now been observed doing something remarkably similar!

In a groundbreaking discovery, wild chimpanzees in the Budongo Forest in Uganda have been filmed applying leaves and chewed-up plants to their own wounds and even to the wounds of others.

Without any former training or healthcare lessons, chimpanzees were able to find specific plants with **medicinal**⁷ properties that they feed on or apply to their injuries in order to heal themselves. One young chimpanzee was seen chewing up a plant and then placing it on its mother's injury.

The chimpanzees have even been seen doing this to animals that aren't related to them. They seem to have a natural talent for health treatment even beyond their families.

Where did they learn all this from? Chimpanzees are very intelligent animals. They seem to have a natural instinct for how to use parts of their **natural habitat**⁸ to help them live. They are able to understand which plants are beneficial for which purposes.

They may even be able to show us plants that serve as natural **remedies**⁹ with healing powers that can be extremely useful to mankind. The chimpanzees might just be the key to unlocking some major forest-held secrets.

Only if they let us in on the secrets, of course.



Uber's Route Sharing Service

Uber has started a new cab service called "Route Share," in which passengers can book rides with other passengers.

On Wednesday, Uber announced that a passenger can reserve a seat on a Route Share with up to two additional passengers in the same vehicle. The Route Share Ubers will run every 20 minutes during rush hour and pick up passengers from designated pick-up points, thereby saving passengers a lot of money.

Uber has been trying to make its service more affordable for people on tighter budgets. Uber Shuttle followed a similar idea in which groups of people traveling to the airport or a one-off event could order an Uber shuttle for a cheaper fare than a private cab. These budget-friendly options are needed by transport users who do not own cars. Private cabs are often too costly for their daily needs, especially for commuting to and from work, and Route Share may be the answer for the masses.

7. **medicinal**: related to medicine

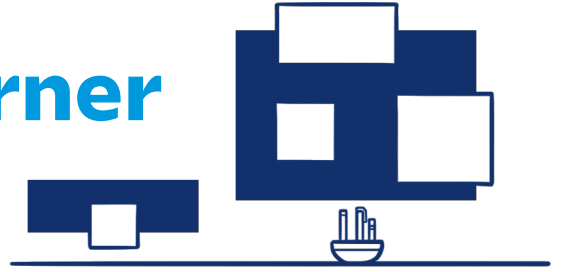
8. **natural habitat**: natural place where an animal lives

9. **remedies**: cures



Academic Corner

By Chani Karp



Earthquakes

Earthquakes are potentially life-threatening events that occur when the ground shakes. Weaker earthquakes can pass without anyone knowing about them, and in fact millions of them occur every year. However, severe earthquakes are deadly, often destroying buildings and killing people. On Sunday and Monday, several strong earthquakes struck close to Greece and was felt as far away as Egypt and Turkey. What are earthquakes, and how do they happen?

The Earth's outer surface is divided into many separate pieces called tectonic plates. These plates are constantly moving around due to the thick liquid magma that bubbles beneath them. The huge floating pieces of land all fit together like perfect pieces of a puzzle, but underground movement can create tension above ground.

When the plates rub against each other or collide, it causes a huge force that shakes the surface of the Earth, creating an earthquake. The **seismic**¹⁰ activity can cause building and

bridges to collapse and can also lead to indirect catastrophes. Large fires can be triggered by the tremors, and deep underwater earthquakes can start **tsunamis**.¹¹

Scientists use special instruments that can detect the energy that tectonic plates release, known as seismic energy. Earthquakes are rated in strength from 1 to 10 on the Moment Magnitude Scale (MMS). This scale records the level of seismic energy released from the moving plates on a **logarithmic**¹² scale. This means that each number represents 10 times the strength of the previous number. Lower numbers result in slight shaking with no big impact, while larger numbers can result in massive damage such as buildings collapsing, downed power lines, and floods.

Scientists can detect rising movements and quickly warn people nearby, but they usually have only a few minutes before the earthquake hits in full force.

10. seismic: related to vibrations of the Earth's surface

11. tsunamis: tidal waves

12. logarithmic: exponential

This Week in History

By Bonnie K. Goodman

MAY 17, 1954:

Brown v. Board of Ed

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on *Brown v. Board of Education*, marking a critical turning point in U.S. civil rights. The court deemed racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional and set a new course for U.S. education and civil rights. Children could no longer be separated by race at the schools, and they were legally required to be educated together.

This decision overturned an already existing judgment in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), wherein segregation was allowed if the establishments were “separate but equal,” disregarding the fact that Black schools received significantly less funding and were almost never materially equal.

The case began when Oliver Brown, a Black man from Topeka, Kansas, tried to register his daughter Linda in a white school. After being turned away, Oliver joined 12 other Black families and, with support from the NAACP, filed a class-action lawsuit. They argued that segregation violated the 14th Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection.

Chief Justice Earl Warren led the unanimous decision that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” He said that denying education based on race harmed students’ development and future success. The court found that segregation in schools was unlawful and that freedom under the law must include equal education. This was a landmark decision that paved the way for complete **integration**¹¹ in schools.



May 16, 1868: After the House impeached President Andrew Johnson, the Senate failed to remove him, short the required supermajority by a single vote. This was the first presidential impeachment in U.S. history.

May 18, 1896: In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation was lawful as long as facilities were “separate but equal.” This decision remained the law until *Brown v. Board of Ed* overturned it in 1954.

May 19, 1921: Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act, which restricted immigration based on national origin. This policy severely impacted European refugees fleeing Nazi Germany during the 1930s, making it harder for them to enter the country.

May 20, 1862: Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis received a patent for denim work pants that were made to be strong and durable. The blue jeans soon became one of the most recognized fashions across the globe.

May 21, 1932: Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean from Newfoundland to Ireland, completing the journey in 15 hours. Earhart continued to serve as an inspiration for many young female pilots.

May 22, 1856: Supporters of slavery rioted in Lawrence, Kansas, burning buildings and vandalizing anti-slavery newspapers. This event, dubbed “Bleeding Kansas,” was part of the growing conflict over slavery that led to the Civil War.

Review Questions



Brown v. Board of Ed

1. What Supreme Court decision was overturned in *Brown v. Board of Ed*?

2. What was the reason that Oliver Brown sued the local board of ed?

3. What were the long-term consequences of the *Brown* ruling?



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